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From USDA's Economic Research Service    Winter 1988/89

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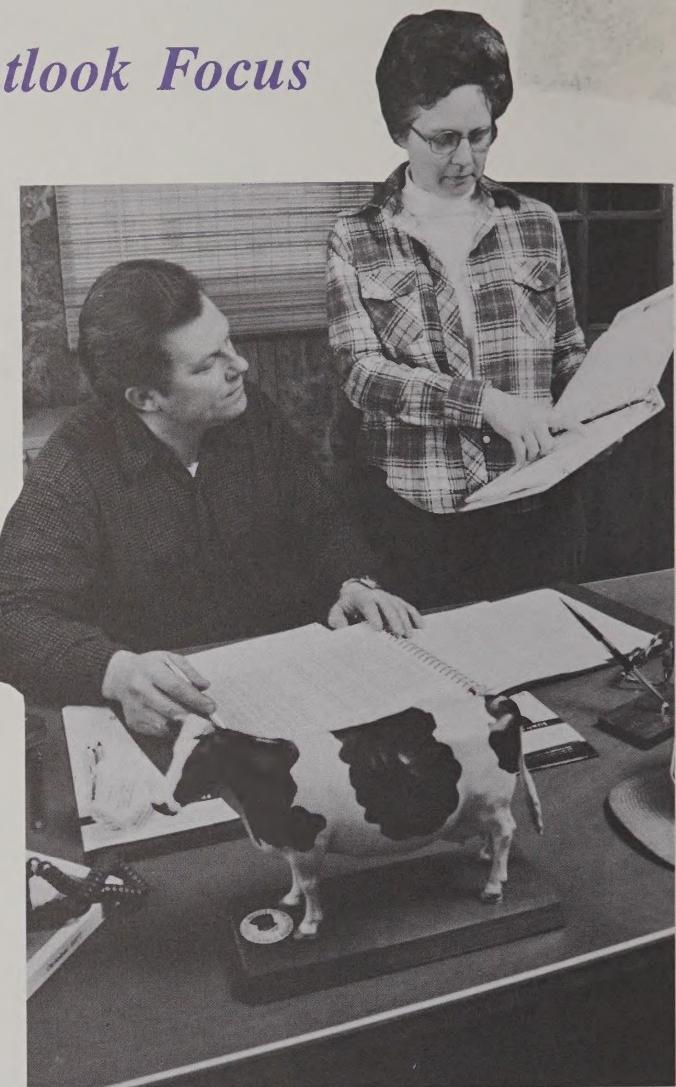
Agricultural Outlook Conference  
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- **Global outlook.** The World Agricultural Outlook Board regularly updates the world agricultural situation. See page 5.
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The Economic Research Service has developed a series of computerized databases covering important elements of today's agribusiness and related activities here and abroad. A free catalog with descriptions and prices for each is available from ERS; check the box on page 3. For more information about the ERS databases, call Jim Horsfield at (202) 786-3306. The databases are:

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- Financial Performance of Specialized Rice Farms in the South, 1986—**NEW**
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**Food Marketing Review, 1987.** AER-590. August 1988. 122 pp. Order SN: 001-019-00594-7 from GPO. Order SN: 001-019-00594-7 from GPO. \$6.00.

Analyzes and assesses recent developments in the U.S. food marketing system, encompassing all firms marketing the U.S. food supply. Sales of the U.S. food marketing system rose about 4 percent to \$600 billion in 1987.

**The U.S. Farm Sector: How Agricultural Exports Are Shaping Rural Economies in the 1980's,** by Judith E. Sommer and Fred K. Hines. AIB-541. August 1988. 23 pp. Order SN: 001-019-00591-2 from GPO. \$1.50.

Compares differences in farm structure, employment, and income to assess how changes in export markets affect the economic performance of groups of counties and selected regions. Identifies U.S. counties and regions that chiefly produce the five commodities which make up the bulk of U.S. farm exports: corn, wheat, soybeans, cotton, and rice.

**The Economic Importance of Cotton Insects and Mites,** by Luis Sugiyama and Craig Osteen. AER-599. October 1988. 33 pp. Order SN: 001-019-00601-3 from GPO. \$2.00.

Examines how insects and mites affect U.S. agriculture through cotton yield losses, control costs, and potential hazards caused by these pests and pest control methods. Insects and mites cost cotton producers \$645 million a year in yield losses and pest control costs (direct damage) during 1981-84, over half of which was spent on chemical controls.

**Food Cost Review, 1987,** by Denis Dunham. AER-596. September 1988. 53 pp. Order SN: 001-019-00599-8 from GPO. \$2.75.

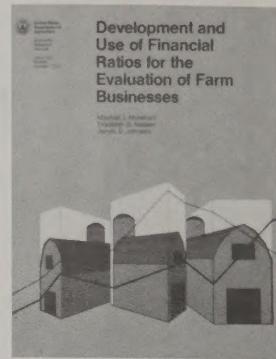
Examines the size and cause of food price increases, how much of the retail food price the farm value represents, how recent developments affect food industry costs and profits, and how much Americans spent for farm-produced foods. Food prices, as measured by the Consumer Price Index, increased 4.1 percent in 1987, compared with a 3.2-percent rise in 1986.

**Financial Characteristics of U.S. Farms, January 1, 1988.** AIB-551. October 1988. 180 pp. Order SN: 001-019-00600-5 from GPO. \$9.00.

Finds that the financial conditions of most farmers and ranchers continued improving in 1987. Nominal net farm income (profitability) reached a record high of \$45 billion due to relatively stable farm production expenses, a 45-percent rise in Government payments to farmers and ranchers, and a modest rise in farm product sales.

**Characteristics of Irrigated Agriculture in the United States,** by John J. Hanchar. AER-593. August 1988. 26 pp. Order SN: 001-019-00597-1 from GPO. \$5.00.

A profile of irrigated agriculture, using data from a special tabulation of the 1982 Census of Agriculture. Provides a foundation for studies of the structure and performance of the irrigated sector. More than 30 percent of irrigated farms were livestock operations in 1982.



**Development and Use of Financial Ratios for the Evaluation of Farm Businesses,** by Mitchell J. Moreheart, Elizabeth G. Nielsen, and James D. Johnson. TB-1743. October 1988. 76 pp. Order SN: 001-019-00603-0 From GPO. \$3.75.

Develops a series of ratios that can be used in monitoring and comparing the financial performance of U.S. farm businesses, using four performance elements: solvency, liquidity and coverage, efficiency, and profitability.

**Federal Milk Marketing Orders: An Analysis of Alternative Policies,** by Howard McDowell, Ann M. Fleming, and Richard F. Fallert. AER-598. September 1988. 61 pp. Order SN: 001-019-00598-0 from GPO. \$3.50.

The current system of Federal milk marketing orders could be modified so that it increases economic efficiency while maintaining market stability and reducing risk. Looks at four possible modifications: removing the pricing practices that discourage reconstituting dairy products for fluid use, establishing a single nationwide milk marketing order, eliminating the classified pricing system, and pricing Grade A milk for fluid use from multiple price-basing points rather than from the current single price-basing point in central Wisconsin.

## Three new industry reports

**Economics of the U.S. Meat Industry,** by Richard J. Crom. AIB-545. November 1988. 82 pp. Order SN: 001-01900588-2 from GPO. \$5.50.

This overview of the meat industry finds that total U.S. meat production will probably grow slowly between 1987 and 2000. Also reports on the activities and concerns of meat manufacturers, consumers, and those who regulate the industry.

**The U.S. Tobacco Industry,** by Verner N. Grise and Karen F. Griffin. AER-589. September 1988. 66 pp. Order SN: 001-019-00586-6 from GPO. \$3.50.

Examines the U.S. tobacco industry--tobacco use, production, and trade--and how Government programs affect tobacco farmers. Cultural practices, harvesting and curing systems, market preparation, and production costs for tobacco are also reviewed.

**The U.S. Broiler Industry,** by Floyd A. Lasley, Harold B. Jones, Jr., Edward H. Easterling, and Lee A. Christensen. AER-591. November 1988. 96 pp. Order SN: 001-019-00595-5 from GPO. \$4.50.

Identifies current trends in consumption, retail prices, production costs, and returns in the broiler industry. Americans are eating more broilers than ever because of low real prices, new products, and preference for lean meat. Further processed products, sold mostly to fast food outlets, represent the fastest growing sector of the industry.

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**U.S. Soybean Trade and Exchange Rate Volatility**, by Margot Anderson. TB-1748. 28 pp. October 1988. NEW. Order from NTIS. \$13.95.

Develops a model to determine the extent to which agricultural markets are vulnerable to variations in exchange rates, and how uncertainty over the variations affects U.S. soybean exports to Japan, Spain, and France, under a variety of conditions.

**Characteristics of Burley Tobacco Farms**, by Annette L. Clauson. AER-600. 19 pp. October 1988. NEW. Order from NTIS. \$13.95.

Provides information about burley tobacco farm enterprises for the 1984 crop year. Burley tobacco farms surveyed produced an average of 2.3 acres of tobacco in 1984 on an average of 122 acres of farmland operated.

**Federal and State Regulations of Food Product Safety and Quality: A Selected, Partially Annotated Bibliography**, by Julie A. Caswell. BLA-70. 42 pp. September 1988. NEW. Order from NTIS. \$13.95.

Contains an annotated section emphasizing articles on jurisdictional conflict between Federal and State regulations of food products and the use of Federal preemption to limit conflict, and a bibliography of economic, legal, and public health research on regulatory policies and individual Federal and State food regulations.

### Staff Reports

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